

Issue: Consolidation of grievances for a single hearing; Ruling Date: August 23, 2013; Ruling No. 2014-3700; Agency: Department of Social Services; Outcome: Consolidation Granted.



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Human Resource Management
Office of Employment Dispute Resolution

CONSOLIDATION RULING

In the matter of the Department of Social Services
Ruling Number 2014-3700
August 23, 2013

This ruling addresses the consolidation of the grievant's two grievances filed with the Department of Social Services (the agency). For the reasons discussed below, the Office of Employment Dispute Resolution (EDR) finds that consolidation of these grievances into a single hearing is appropriate and practicable.

FACTS

The two grievances at issue are 1) a May 24, 2013 grievance regarding a Group II Written Notice issued to the grievant, and 2) a June 6, 2013 dismissal grievance challenging a second Group II Written Notice accompanying the grievant's termination from employment. Both disciplinary actions were issued by the grievant's immediate supervisor. Both parties agree that consolidation is appropriate in this instance.

DISCUSSION

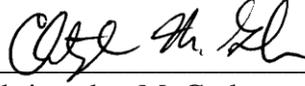
Approval by EDR in the form of a compliance ruling is required before two or more grievances may be consolidated in a single hearing. Moreover, EDR may consolidate grievances for hearing without a request from either party.¹ EDR strongly favors consolidation and will consolidate grievances when they involve the same parties, legal issues, policies, and/or factual background, unless there is a persuasive reason to process the grievances individually.²

EDR finds that consolidation of the grievant's May 24, 2013 and June 6, 2013 grievances is appropriate. These grievances involve the same grievant and could share common themes, claims, and witnesses. The grievances both relate to disciplinary actions issued to the grievant by his immediate supervisor, which ended in his termination. Further, we find that consolidation is not impracticable in this instance. Therefore, the grievant's May 24, 2013 and June 6, 2013 grievances are consolidated for a single hearing. A hearing officer will be appointed in a forthcoming letter.

¹ *Grievance Procedure Manual* § 8.5.

² *See id.*

EDR's rulings on compliance are final and nonappealable.³



Christopher M. Grab
Director
Office of Employment Dispute Resolution

³ See Va. Code §§ 2.2-1202.1(5), 2.2-3003(G).